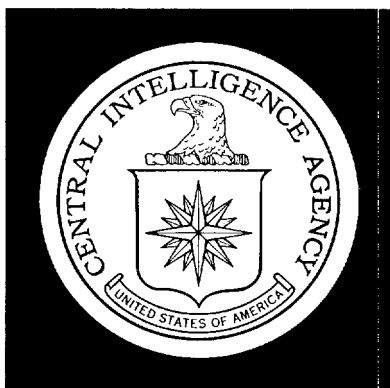


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LAOS: The procedural impasse that has forestalled negotiations between the government and the Pathet Lao may have been broken.

Reports are circulating in Vientiane that the 16 November meeting between Prime Minister Souvanna and Pathet Lao leader Souphanouvong's representative--the first since the latter's return to Vientiane--resulted in an agreement to proceed with the talks in Khang Khay. A subsequent Lao Government communiqué, however, only states that the two sides exchanged views on an "eventual meeting." It did not explicitly state that an agreement had been reached, and again referred to the government's negotiator as representing Souvanna as head of government rather than as "prince." The communiqué mentions the government's standing offer to intercede with the International Control Commission to provide safe transportation for the Communist delegation, thus implying that the 16 November talks moved on to the mechanics of a Khang Khay meeting.

Government officials are stating [] that the Communists capitulated on the question of the status of Souvanna's negotiator, but the 16 November communiqué has not been subscribed to by the Communists nor have they yet provided their version of where things now stand. It may be that, as in the past, eager government officials have misconstrued the Communist position. It is also possible that the Communists and the government have implicitly, if not explicitly, agreed to move on to Khang Khay, with each side sticking to its own line concerning on whose behalf the negotiators are talking. []

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BURMA: The dismissal of Revolutionary Council member Tin Pe completes his political eclipse but does not presage any changes in Burma's socialist course.

Rangoon announced on 14 November that Tin Pe, one-time close associate of General Ne Win and formerly number two man in the military hierarchy, was being retired from his government positions at his request because of ill health. He recently returned from a seven-month exile stemming from scandals in his government ministry that apparently also led to the recent removal of his brother-in-law and political henchman, Tan Yu Saing. Although Tin Pe is definitely in political disgrace, his failing health has now opened the way for his removal with a minimum of political repercussions.

Tin Pe was widely regarded as the leader of the leftist faction in Burma's military leadership, but his departure will probably not result in any weakening of the regime's commitment to its brand of socialism. Ne Win is firmly committed to the Marxist policies often ascribed to Tin Pe's inspiration.

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MOROCCO: The opposition coalition, the National Front, is continuing to use the issue of "US bases" in Morocco to embarrass the government.

On Sunday, the Front issued a communiqué calling for the immediate evacuation of American military personnel from Kenitra, Sidi Yahia, and Bouknadel, the communications complex used under an informal agreement with the King. The communiqué was featured in both the French-language and Arabic-language dailies published by the ardently nationalist Istiqlal Party, which led the propaganda struggle against French, Spanish, and US bases in Morocco in the late 1950s.

The communiqué touched on two points about which the government is sensitive: the "extraterritoriality" represented by US-run stores, schools, and hospitals associated with the facilities; and the fact that they are used to support US military forces, particularly the Sixth Fleet. The Front asserted that allowing such activity to continue on Moroccan soil "negates solidarity with the Arab and Palestinian people" and will not sit well with "Arab countries that are victims of imperialist aggression."

The Front has been badly outmaneuvered by King Hassan in recent months and has been casting about for issues that might help it to gain some ground. The fact that the authorities have permitted it to publish what amounts to a serious condemnation of the regime could, however, indicate that King Hassan believes he can exploit the issue with respect to US assistance.

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TURKEY: Time may be running out for the moderate government of Prime Minister Demirel.

Parliament, which reconvened on 1 November, is at an impasse because the Lower House has been unable to select a speaker, the necessary first order of business. Numerous ballots have been taken but no candidate has been able to gain a majority. If Demirel is forced to accept a compromise candidate, he will be openly admitting his parliamentary weakness and may touch off additional defections from the ruling Justice Party (JP). At least two JP deputies, including the former speaker of the Lower House, have resigned from the JP in recent days, and the press is speculating that other resignations may be imminent.

Demirel received overwhelming support during the national convention of the JP in late October, but he has been unable to translate this into firm parliamentary strength. Conservative dissidents from the party, who were ousted from the JP last spring for failing to maintain party discipline, have joined opposition elements in an attempt to dump Demirel. The schism within the JP, however, basically represents a struggle between moderates and conservatives over personalities, not issues. Although the conservatives are apparently in a minority, they will continue to be a disruptive factor in Parliament until new elections either remove or substantially reduce them in number.

Unless there is some evidence soon of a movement toward renewed political stability, pressures will increase among the military leadership to intervene either directly or indirectly.

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GUYANA: Prime Minister Burnham is methodically moving his government toward an authoritarian, one-party state.

On 14 November the government announced that local elections will be held on 7 December, but it gave candidates only the weekend in which to file. The opposition United Force Party immediately stated that it would not participate in the balloting because it would be impossible for its 700 candidates to file in the two days allotted. Burnham has refused to extend the deadline, claiming that this would interfere with a scheduled parliamentary budget debate.

Last month Communist leader Cheddi Jagan said that his party would abstain from the elections, charging that the government consistently and blatantly rigged them. With only minor local parties in the contest, therefore, Burnham's People's National Congress Party will gain almost total control of local government machinery throughout the country.

The US Embassy comments that Burnham seems to have deliberately arranged the filing deadline to make compliance difficult, if not impossible, and that he anticipated that the United Force would abstain. The ambassador adds that this is the strongest indication to date that Burnham is deliberately headed toward an authoritarian government and that the prime minister is no longer greatly concerned about maintaining the machinery or the image of a democratic system.

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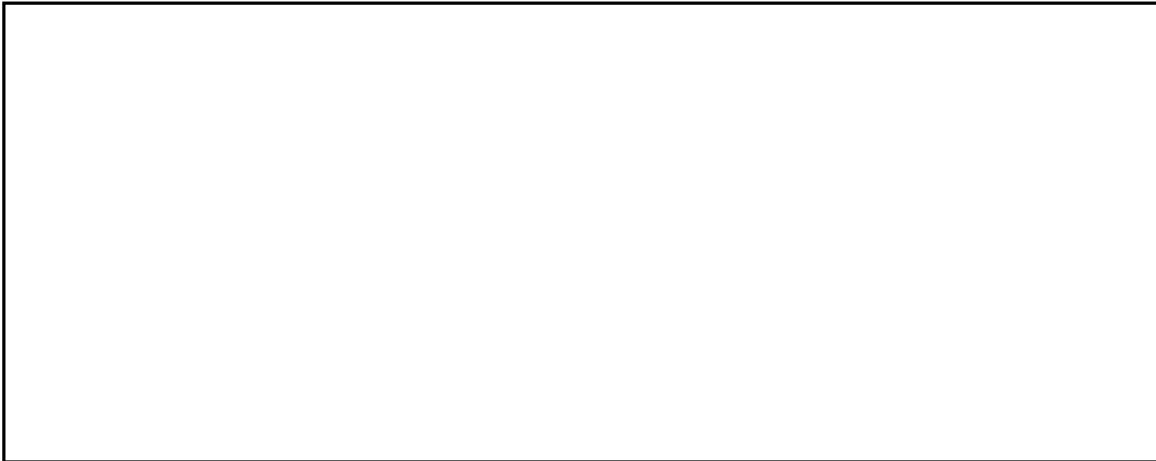
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EGYPT: Preliminary reports indicate that the new cabinet will not differ radically from the previous one. According to the semiofficial newspaper al-Ahram, the majority of the former ministers will retain their posts or merely be shifted to new ministries, with the more important cabinet members continuing in power. The influence of Interior Minister Sharawi Jumah has apparently been strengthened by his appointment to one of four re-created deputy premier slots. The cabinet shifts may be designed to produce a body with which Egypt's new leaders can work more harmoniously. Some of the changes may also reflect an effort to bring new blood into ministries concerned with domestic and economic affairs. 

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SPAIN - EASTERN EUROPE: Madrid is considering upgrading its consular representations in Romania and Poland to the rank of embassies, possibly as early as the first part of 1971. It has also opened negotiations with Yugoslavia on the possibility of establishing consular relations. Spain is motivated by a desire to widen its relations with Eastern Europe in order to enhance its international standing. Spain and most of the East European countries involved want to obtain additional commercial outlets. During recent months, high-level visits have been exchanged, the Polish airline LOT began regular service to Madrid, and Spanish polemical anti-Communist broadcasts to Eastern Europe have been curtailed. [REDACTED]

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ANDEAN COMMON MARKET: A draft code governing foreign investment in the Andean Common Market, a regional economic grouping embracing Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia, is expected to engender considerable debate within the group's Commission. The code would limit foreign investment in such sectors as transportation, utilities, and communications and restrict operations of foreign-owned banks. Foreign companies establishing manufacturing facilities would have to offer 51 percent of their stock for sale to domestic nationals within 15 years for export-oriented industries and within ten years in the case of others. Ecuador, one of the two least developed members, is highly critical of the proposals because it fears foreign investments into the country would be seriously cut back. [REDACTED]

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GREECE: A request by shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis for a beneficial revision of a multi-million-dollar investment deal is causing difficulty between Prime Minister Papadopoulos and Coordination Minister Makarezos. A government committee, headed by Makarezos, turned down Onassis' request over the prime minister's objections. The project, which includes the construction of Greece's third oil refinery, has been an explosive issue among regime members since 1968. Makarezos has opposed the prime minister on this question in the past whenever it appeared Papadopoulos was willing to grant Onassis special concessions. Until the issue is finally settled, it remains a potentially divisive question among the regime hierarchy. [REDACTED]

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IRAN: Final results of the elections held in early fall for seats on the newly established district and provincial councils show a continuing lack of public interest in the electoral process. Only about ten percent of the eligible electorate participated, despite the efforts of officials to bring the people further into the governing process. The government's Iran Novin Party captured 130 out of 150 district councils and all 13 provincial councils. The opposition Mardom Party sank to a new low after a dispirited campaign, gaining only 16 district councils. Even this poor showing, however, was the result of government efforts in Mardom's behalf--a reflection of the Shah's interest in preserving a two-party system. [REDACTED]

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